

## **Regional Development and Sustainability Committee**

### **Earthquake Briefing Series**

**Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

### **Public Education Program**

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The recent events in Japan, New Zealand and Chile have reemphasized the importance of community preparedness. In each event, it was the individuals who lived and worked in the impacted area who became the extension of the response and recovery efforts. This is not unlike the neighbor helping neighbor actions that we have seen in the United States in events like the Loma Prieta and Northridge Earthquakes, Hurricane Katrina and more recently in Joplin. People are more likely to be able to lend a hand if they are aware of the impacts of a disaster, know how to be safe and take actions to prepare and plan to respond together to the anticipated challenges they will face. The Seattle Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Public Education Program strives to educate and empower individuals and neighborhoods with knowledge, skills and the basic understanding that community members will be on their own for days or longer following a major earthquake.

### **Public Education Overview**

The City of Seattle has dedicated a great deal of time and effort to improving response efforts in preparation a major earthquake. Even in the best case scenario, following a moderate to major earthquake, City services will be overwhelmed and we will need our community members to be ready to help take care of themselves and those around them until help can arrive.

**Mission Statement:** Motivate people through education to prepare to take care of family, friends and neighbors for a minimum of three days following a disaster.

### **Public Education Strategy**

In the past, the emergency management public education program focused entirely on organizing neighborhoods. In 2006, a major shift in the philosophy and delivery of public education programs occurred, with the goal of better meeting the diverse needs of residents and expanding the program to a wider variety of audiences and geographical areas of the city. As part of the new public education strategy, target audiences were redefined and broadened to include City employees; individuals and neighborhoods; and businesses and schools/daycares. Since 2006, each year we have

taught an average 300 programs representing approximately 10,000 participants. Our programs reflect a balance of meeting the needs for our most vulnerable populations and empowering those who are able to do more to take action.

## **Accomplishments**

### **Individual and Neighborhood Preparedness**

The vision for Seattle OEM is “Disaster Ready ... Prepared People, Resilient Community.” With limited resources, the only way to accomplish this vision for public education is to collaborate with partners, provide a wide variety of educational methods and mediums, and capture teachable moments when they present themselves. The following are highlights of ways Seattle OEM has informed, engaged and motivated people to be prepared for emergencies and disasters:

#### **Multi-media campaigns to raise awareness**

- Seattle OEM has partnered with King County OEM to develop, implement and promote the regional “3 to Get Ready” preparedness campaign, conducted in April of 2010 and 2011 by Bonneville.
- Seattle OEM staff members were the primary planning and content experts for this year’s “What If” Expo, hosted by Fisher Communications.
- Seattle OEM staff members continue in an advisory role to the region’s annual “Take Winter by Storm” campaign sponsored by City of Seattle, Puget Sound Energy, King County and State Farm Insurance.

#### **Public education program and outreach**

- Partnerships and programs: Seattle OEM Public Education Program staff partnered with several City departments to help introduce disaster preparedness education to parts of the city that had not been reached before. The previous neighborhood program was streamlined and reformatted to be more open, transparent and self driven with all the information and tools available on the web for download and printing. Seattle OEM Public Education staff have systematically provided Seattle Neighborhoods Actively Prepared (SNAP) preparedness and neighborhood organizing programs in all 13 neighborhood districts at least once a year for the past 5 years. The programs have been hosted by Seattle Public Libraries and co-supported by Department of Neighborhoods and Seattle Parks Department. For the past two years, advertising of the programs via geographically-targeted direct mail has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of participants in each class.

- Skills training: Participation in disaster skills training programs such as Simple Search and Rescue, Disaster First Aid, and Fire Extinguisher/Utility Control were on the decline, due in part to the cost to participants. By using available grant funds to offset the cost of delivery, we were able to offer the programs at no charge to the participants. As a result, classes have been at full capacity with waitlists for each.
- Home retrofit: The Home Retrofit Program remains strong. Volunteer instructors on average teach one class per month for 30 participants on seismic retrofit for residential structures.
- New training and information outreach: In response to class surveys, several new, more in-depth programs have been created, such as Disaster Psychology, Leadership Academy, Conducting Effective Neighborhood Drills and Disaster Movie Night. In January, 2010, Seattle OEM Public Education staff began distributing a monthly email newsletter to interested individuals (approximately 1,800 people). This routine connection is used to announce upcoming classes, skills trainings, special workshops and other preparedness news and updates. The list is also used for “SNAP Advisories” to warn of impending situations, e.g. hazardous weather or other potential large-scale emergency.
- Immigrant and Refugee Communities: Meeting with and gaining community trust has been the foundation for creating programs and partnerships to outreach to immigrant and refugee communities. Regional partnerships with Public Health, Red Cross, United Way, City of Renton and City of Bellevue have resulted in the hosting of multiple workshops for Community-Based Organizations to learn/develop/share agency plans and develop partnerships. This has become the model for how to engage underserved populations and create programs and products that meet their needs. Over the past two years, 20 Immigrant & Refugee Elders have been trained and have been providing emergency preparedness trainings for their community members. This includes leaders at Seattle Neighborhood Group, Salaam Urban Village Association, East African Community Services, St. James ESL program leaders, Pacific Asian Empowerment Program, the Ukrainian Community Center of Washington, Coalition for Refugees of Burma and Asian Counseling & Referral Services. Preparedness materials have been translated into 19 languages and are available in print and on the web.
- Because of all of the unique community-based programs and events that Seattle OEM has developed, led or partnered in, FEMA asked Seattle OEM to contribute to developing guiding points for their new “Whole of Community” concept.

- Apartment Managers Programs: In 2010, Seattle OEM started offering preparedness workshops for apartment managers. Two workshops were held in 2010 and one in 2011. The goal of the workshops was to educate the managers so that they can teach their tenants about preparedness and fire prevention. A total of 153 apartment managers, representing more than 12,000 Seattle apartment units, primarily in affordable multi-family communities, attended the three workshops.
- Participation in apartment manager training led to the development of agency and staff trainings in 2011, held in the Seattle EOC for affordable housing management organizations – Housing Resources Group – representing 27 buildings, Capitol Hill Housing – 42 buildings, and Low-Income Housing Institute – 1600 units in six counties.
- In 2011, a similar training for market-rate apartment properties was developed. Twenty-one property managers, representing more than 5,800 apartment units throughout King County, attended.

## **City Employees**

- Seattle OEM has provided preparedness programs and materials to City employees through programs delivered directly, on-line training or by providing materials to departments that preferred to do their own training. In the first two years of our program, over 6,000 employees were taught directly by Seattle OEM staff. An additional 2,200 completed on-line training. For the past two years, we have worked with Personnel Department to conduct quarterly trainings on employee preparedness and incorporated preparedness into the New Employee Orientation and the New Supervisors Orientation. We continue to conduct basic personal preparedness classes twice a year for all city employees as well as on request for any department.

## **Businesses**

Preparedness programs are delivered to individual businesses, corporations and business associations throughout the city.

- Over the past few years, Seattle OEM Public Education staff have worked with several high-rise property management companies in downtown Seattle to provide annual preparedness trainings for floor wardens.
- Programs have been developed to provide specialized staff training for senior retirement communities and to private caregiver organizations.

- A variety of free tools to help businesses develop business continuity plans are available on the Seattle OEM web site. These include:
  - [Insurance Institute for Business Safety](#) free toolkit and training videos to help small businesses develop business disaster and recovery plans
  - [Disaster Resistant Business Toolkit](#) - a product that is available for free with a key code provided by Seattle OEM
  - [FEMA business preparedness](#) has resources to help business prepare
  - [Small Business Administration](#) has a web site called "Prepare My Business".

### **Schools and Childcare Providers**

- Partnering with King County Public Health, Seattle OEM has designed and developed a workshop to help childcare providers around the County develop comprehensive safety and disaster plans. The program has been so successful that grant funds are being used to create and deliver a "train- the-trainer" (TTT) module to expand delivery around the County. The TTT will be complete by December 2011.
- Seattle Public Schools has been a partner with Seattle OEM to help deliver preparedness information to immigrant and refugee families. Interpreters from the School District were instrumental in helping to create an OEM preparedness video that has been translated into 14 languages. The School District uses the video to help families that are new to Seattle become familiar with earthquake safety and preparedness.

### **Impacts and outcomes**

- 2006: King County research estimated 25% of Seattle residents were prepared for disaster vs. 4% nationally
- 2007 King County research update: 56% of Seattle residents reported having basic supplies (food/water, flashlight, first aid kit, am/fm battery radio)
- 2008-2009 Take Winter by Storm campaign: 86% reported having basic supplies  
National survey reported 50%
- Prior to 2006, programs were predominately delivered to two areas of the city. Now programs are delivered geographically throughout the city.
- In 2006, only about 5% of the programs were delivered to vulnerable and underserved populations and information was only available in English. In 2010, at least 50% of the programs were delivered to vulnerable and underserved populations and materials are available in 19 different languages in addition to English.

### **Where do we need improvement?**

- Expand preparedness information for City employees beyond basic personal and family preparedness to include information on their department's role in disaster and how employees may be assigned or re-assigned during disaster.
- Specific and strategic outreach plan for reaching community members in areas of the city that are not as engaged as others.
- The SNAP program needs to be updated to include better on-line registration and products made more engaging, fun and easy.
- Continue to connect SNAP neighborhoods with the Hub program to increase community preparedness and relationship building.
- Actively recruit volunteers and interns to help meet the growing demand for programs. Create a management model for training and maintaining volunteers.
- Develop creative and innovative ways to engage kids in preparedness through lesson plans for schools, interactive games, contests and activities on the web.

### **Challenges for the future**

- The City of Seattle provides staff to do the work of educating and motivating the community on the need to be prepared. Funding to support the programs such as designing and printing materials, translation and interpretation services, contractors to teach skills training programs, advertising and mailing, etc. are all paid from federal grant funds that are rapidly decreasing. Without additional funding from the City or other funding sources, it will be difficult to meet the demand from the community.